UNITY.

FREEDOM, FELLOWSHIP AND CHARACTER IN RELIGION.

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I.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

BY W. C. GANNETT.

The boy's surroundings usually determine what the imagery of the future poet shall be. If by the side of flashing tides his young feet rove and his young eyes catch their first impressions, the salt-sea smell will exhale all through his life from the imagery in his verse. If the eyes open and the first dreams settle upon woods and trees, then woods and trees are apt to wave along the lines forever after. Whoever has wandered through western Massachusetts has been in a land of

> "Hills,
> Broad, round and green, that in the summer sky,
> With garniture of waving grass and grain,
> Orchards and beechen forests, basking lie;
> While deep the sunless glens are scooped between,
> Where brawl o'er shallow beds the streams unseen."

If you followed up those sunless glens and climbed those "rock-ribbed" hills, you would find yourself climbing through dense forest-tangle, over

> "Mossy rocks,
> And the old and ponderous trunks of prostrate trees,
> That lead from knoll to knoll, a causey rude,
> Or bridge the sunken brook, and their dark roots,
> With all their earth upon them, twisting high."

This was the land where Bryant was a boy. He loved to wander off alone into the great groves and follow there the brooks up, up, up, till he came out upon the huge gray cliffs, and thence look down upon the "world of woods," and think boy's thoughts of "Nature in her calm, majestic march." He hardly called it "calm, majestic march" as yet, but he felt the feeling then that goes before the thought. That feeling grew until it filled the man's poems full of woods, glens, brooks, and hill-top views over a green wilderness. And you can paint a calendar of the New England months from the touches in Bryant's verse. The seasons four are all displayed—winter with its first snow, and its trees encased in January ice; spring in its March, its April, and its May, unfoldings; June in its throb of perfect life; the sultry heats of August; the gay woodlands of October. Even the hours of the day may be almost numbered,—morning, still noons, the evening breeze, the silent stars of night.

So close to the calm, majestic Order beat his heart, that Man to him was but part of the roll and flow of Nature. With Man as men he had but little sympathy. In part, his own reserve accounts for this; in part, his double life. Editor and Poet were joined, not mixed, in him. The journal on which he put his daily impress gave ample outlet for such discourse of men and with them as he cared for, and left him free as Poet to dwell apart in his native mood. So a poem for Bryant was a return to the woods.

To the woods, to the solemn, shaded lands. There are flowers, there is bird-song, there is bee-hum, there is the patter of the brook upon the pebbles; yet as a whole there is little laugh in Bryant's Nature. A great serenity covers his landscape, but it is that solemn gladness that we find in the deep heart of woods. Beyond all others he is the poet of trees, old trees, "gray giants" of the forest, "with an unremembered Past, brooding like a Presence 'mid their boughs." Go with him and you are seldom far from the "vast, solemn skirts of the old groves." His "Forest Hymn" for woods is what Coleridge's chant before Chamouni is for mountains. We need but read his "Among the Trees," or the lovely verses beginning "O fairest of the rural maids," to see how he is possessed by the mystery, the life-in-death and death-in-life, of the processes of tree-existence.

Yet the trees themselves are but the gateway, as it were, at which he is wont to stand and catch the vision which makes him poet. That *life-in-death and death-in-life,* is Bryant's central thought and feeling. It is that feeling of which he is the interpreter and priest to men. It pervades his utterance everywhere, giving it a certain elemental quality. It is the tide which flows and ebbs through all his verse. It seems as if he could never shut his eyes to it; could never *not* see the ceaseless, irresistible course of Nature—the flow of form.

"O thou great Movement of the Universe,
Or Change, or Flight of Time—for ye are one!"
—"The circle of eternal change
Which is the life of Nature."
—"My heart is awed within me when I think
Of the great miracle that still goes on,
In silence, round me—the perpetual work
Of thy creation, finished, yet renewed
Forever."

And therefore his heart is *always* awed: for how life goes by and vanishes and more life comes to vanish in its turn, is the theme, not when he speaks of woods alone or running streams, but of the passing generations, of fading empires, of extinct religions, of the disappearing Indian—it is one thought in all these forms. We meet it in the "Hymn of Death," but no less in the "Prairies" and "Hymn of the City," in the poem called the "Ages" or that called simply "Life," in the "Past," the "Evening Revery," the "Death of the Flowers," "June;" and, of the poems elected for translation, in the "Love of God" and the "Order of Nature." The "Thanatopsis" at the beginning of his life, the "Flood of Years" at the end, but echo it in echoing each other.

It was this thought, with the stress laid on its Death-side, that gave the young poet his first fame. "Thanatopsis," a Vision of Death, is a very natural subject for a young poet, but the result in *this* young poet's hands was one of the surprises of poetic history. It was a country boy of eighteen who cast the familiar theme in words of such fit simplicity that they remain the grand cast for the solemn thought. Among the Venuses there is one Venus of Milo; among the poems on Death there is one Thanatopsis. "No American wrote that," said the Cambridge editors when they first read it,—so far above the range of native poetry lay the firm lines in their naked dignity. "Naked" is the word. The Thanatopsis is noble by its unclothed simplicity. Speak of Death in fewest words: if fit, they give the grand effect, for Death itself is seen! And this stripling in his teens had that rare reserve in his own nature that enabled him to speak in this way. It was a *deed*, and as it passed through the papers of the land and was caught into those of England, and translated into German, French, Italian, Swedish, men felt that a poet had been born in the American wilds. It may be said with truth that it was the first real poem that our country had produced. We had had the "Muse" here in abundance; but that was the trouble,—as usual, she was here by quantity, not by quality. This was the first *poem* of the continent.

Closely allied to this thought in Bryant is another,—so closely that it hardly is another,—which also shows itself in many variations: the thought *how one life or influence in its flow enters into other lives*, becoming a part of theirs. He cannot speak of "Planting the Apple-Tree," without following the crop of apples around the world; nor of the "Sower," without seeing a long procession rise of those to whom the wheat will be the bread of life; nor of a "Fountain," without seeing the wolf who first lapped at it—next, the wounded Indian slaking his thirst—then, the settler's blue-eyed girls dipped their pails—then, the lovers and the poets who have wandered by it; nor of the "Night-Journey of a River," without picturing the various homes it will glide and sob by; nor of the "Evening Wind," without thinking of the old and young, the glad and sad, whom it has cooled on its way to touch his brow; nor of a "Path" or an "Unknown Way" without tracing them into the great highway by which they join the world-circuits binding East with West. Only in this sense is Bryant a poet of Man: and this is what was meant by saying that he is poet of Man as a part of Nature, not of Man as men and women.

Now, to be possessed by a vision of this kind makes one both Poet and Priest. For this is the perception of the Unity of things; and it is the perception of the One-in-All that lies at the heart of poetry as at the heart of religion, making them poetry and religion, and showing how closely these two are allied. Without this recognition, one may have pretty fancies and rhyme them musically, but he writes no "poem." With it, though you never weave a verse, your insight is "imagination," and your thought is "poems." Without it, one may believe in doctrines or be faithful at the rite, but "O, thou of little faith!" applies to him. With it, though your mind has passed beyond all doctrines, your heart is bowing. Bryant had it. It was too limited in him, too logical, too much confined to contiguities of time and space, to make him poet of poets; but he had it, and with it power to "wreak himself on verse." Thereby, last June, a Priest and Poet died.

How does this elemental quality, this central thought, this monotone, of Bryant—that all in Nature flows, mingles, vanishes—affect the reader? Is the impression sad? Nay. Is it glad? Hardly that. It is an impression as of solemn cheer, of a trust that is not resignation, so simply is it serene content with Nature's fact. Her "calm, majestic march," suggests "unfaltering trust." Again and again the poems end like—yet so unlike!—a Sun-

day-School hymn, with a look toward a Bright Beyond. "Be it ours," he prays,

> "To meditate
> In these calm shades thy milder majesty,
> And *to the beautiful order of thy works*
> *Learn to conform the order of our lives*"

In some verses about the "Poet," which should be read to learn what Bryant judged to be the secret of his own vocation, he lays it down that only

> "Feelings of calm power and mighty sweep,
> Like currents journeying through the windless deep,"

should find their way to utterance in lays—betraying the mood in which he wrote his own, the mood to which he exalts those who follow him. Fervors of feeling have no place in that mood, but the reverence is as deep as "love," the loyalty as strong as "devotion." Seldom naming the name "God," he seems at worship always. With more than written syllables, the Presence in which he stands is manifest. Yet he is above all straining to avoid a name. For noble readings, recall his lines "To a Waterfowl," or the "Hymn of the City," or the long stanza of the "Forest Hymn," beginning, "Father, thy hand hath reared these venerable columns," and ending,

> "That delicate forest flower,
> With scented breath and look so like a smile,
> Seems, as it issues from the shapeless mould,
> An emanation of the indwelling Life,
> A visible token of the upholding Love,
> That are the soul of this great universe."

"Mr. Bryant used to say that a gentleman should never talk of his love affairs or of his religion. There was no subject which for many years appeared to occupy more of his thoughts than religion, none about which he seemed more willing to listen; but of his own spiritual experiences he was singularly reticent. I do not remember to have ever heard him define his creed upon any point of theology or give utterance to a single dogma; neither do I believe such an utterance can be found in any of his writings; though so profound were his religious feelings and convictions that they found expression in a series of exquisite devotional hymns, which I trust may some day be given to the public." So his friend who knew him long and well tells us. But, if one is curious about such things, it seems not hard from his poems to learn that the poet of Thanatopsis believed in Christ as

> "The Mighty Sufferer, of aspect sweet,
> He who, returning glorious from the grave,
> Dragged Death, disarmed, in chains;"

and that he looked forward to death as the "Return of Youth," and the time when parted friends should meet again.

Churchwise, Bryant had been bred in New England Congregationalism; but when he went to New York, he joined the little band of Unitarians, and was one of the Vice-Presidents of their Association at his death. His pastor tells us that he believed in the church and its ordinances increasingly. It was in a long walk with a minister-friend, on the shore of the Bay of Naples, in the spring of 1858, that "he spoke with softened heart of the new beauty that he felt in the old truth, and proposed to his friend to baptize him. With prayer and hymn and spiritual meditation, a little company of seven, in a large upper room, as in the Christian story, partook of the communion, and, with his good gray head bowed down, Bryant was baptized." In theology, he no doubt would stand by the side of the elder, rather than the later, Unitarians. But the Poet, whether Bryant or another, is no theologian, no man of "doctrines." Emerson, Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes are, also, all Unitarian by sympathy, but only in the grand sense, probably, would any of the five care for, or even accept, the name of "Unitarian;" that is, they are not men, nor was Bryant the man, to seek the corner-stones of faith in Bible-texts,—but such as know that deed is more than creed, and that all doctrines are but clumsy symbols, and all man's varying Churches are but chapels in the one great Temple of the human heart. Therefore, by lack of "Christian" emphasis, Bryant might be called—he has been called—a "heathen" poet; which is another way of saying that he is a poet of Natural Religiousness. The word is exaltation. With all his Christian faith, he *is* of the order of the great, trustful Stoics.

I have not spoken, after all, of his great poem, his best "act of faith," his best contribution to Religion—the poet's character. Let me add but this: Rectitude, truthfulness, justice, purity, temperance, are the words for which his name was a recognized synonym. "He never seemed to exercise self-control, so completely had it become the law of his life to do what appeared to him best to be done." He *was* the "beautiful order" that his verse so constantly and reverently celebrated.

"As ye go, preach," was the word given to the old disciples; "and they went through the towns preaching." For more than fifty years he mingled with the throng upon the city-streets, and the Spirit to whom he offered up the "City Hymn" quickened the words he wrote, the works he did, till men, in bowing as his white head passed, bowed in thought to the Good Poet, Good Editor, Good Man—and said one to another, "BRYANT!"

THE GROWTH OF DOCTRINE; OR, THE OLD-NEW CREED.

NUMBER ONE

TRINITY—UNITY.

BY BROOKE HERFORD.

It must always be of extreme interest to study the various ways in which the races and ages of mankind have shaped out their sense of the Divine Life. This haunting sense of mighty life in the universe, other than man's own, is one of the great facts of humanity. What is the nature of it, is one of the earliest, and equally one of the most lasting, problems of human thinking. Among the earliest unmistakable traces of man, in the rude sepulchres of prehistoric races, among the debris of old-world lake dwellings and the tombs of the mound-builders, are ever found rude images which tell of some thought of God. And in these latest days, men are still looking as earnestly as ever into the same mystery. Again and again it has been declared that there is no mystery; simply—nothing. "Science," said Auguste Comte, "conducts God with honor to its frontiers, thanking him for his provisional services." But the ancient mystery is no sooner bowed out at the door than it is in again at the window. The very eagerness of the assurance that it has departed contradicts itself. Men do not trouble themselves to-day with disproving alchemy or witchcraft! When, age by age, we find the most eager and reverent thought of man directed to one object, we cannot help believing that there must be something to think of.

The special subject, touching this Divine Life, that I want to consider in this paper, is its Unity—the Unity of God. I am not going to consider this merely in contradistinction to the doctrine of the Trinity. Indeed our Trinitarian friends maintain that they hold the Unity of God, as strongly as we do; and, in the present day, at least, this is about true. But I want to trace out some of the larger varieties of human religion which stand as opposed to this simple Unity of God, and to see how at the heart of them all there was a tendency toward it; how, even while in some ways they corrupted and complicated that Unity, it was never quite lost; and how it is coming out, now, more and more—as the one crowning and most helpful thought of God.

It seems as if man must ever have begun with some form of Polytheism. The world, to the gaze of the savage, seems not only tremulous with life, but tremulous with different lives. The winds and the waves seem under different powers—powers that in the storm are in battle and conflict. It is one spirit that seems to look at man in the sunlight; another in the watching eyes that glow out of the darkness. Every season seems animated by a different intention; to the rude races who first experienced such alternations as those which keep our thermometers moving up and down, it was inevitable they should suggest conflict—separate Gods of winter and of spring alternately getting the upper hand. Very strange and various are the ways in which the most striking points of this mighty life behind nature fastened on the human mind in those earliest stages. Sometimes it struck them in some unusual object—a stone, a piece of wood—with something uncanny in it. This was Fetichism. Sometimes it seemed to look out at them from the depths of some curious animal expression, in bull or crocodile, leading to animal worship. In nobler ways still, it idealized great men or great qualities of manhood, into such Deities as those of Greece and Rome. Noblest of all, it seemed to glow from the overarching beneficent heavens, drawing man's adoration to the sun and stars. It was out of this sun and star worship of the old Chaldeans that Abraham seems to have gone forth, called by that voice within, which he believed—and surely he was not far wrong—to be the voice of *the One only true God*. Like a mountain touched with the dayspring, that old Hebrew Monotheism which he founded lifts itself above the twilight levels of the other old-world religions. And yet those twilight Polytheisms were all touched, here and there, by the same light. Underneath the quaint idol forms of ancient Egypt was a nobler thought ever struggling toward the Unity of God, even if never clearly reaching it. Back of all the manifold Deities of Greece and Rome was an unshaped power which bound the Gods themselves into a sort of Unity. It was impossible even for the Gods to escape fate. And just as the Hebrew word for God, "Elohim," by its plural form bears witness of a time when their progenitors really believed in Gods, so—reversing the order of observation—we find the Greek word, "*theoi*," the Gods, coming, in the nobler writers, to be used without any plural meaning, as the expression for that totality of Divine Life which the greatest minds—like Plato and Socrates—were more and more thinking of as *One*.

It was a higher stage in the thought of God—a stage reaching into the realms of philosophy—when men rose out of these deifications of the objects or

powers of nature, to the conception of a mighty, inscrutable, unapproachable Divine Life, of which these lesser Divine objects were *emanations* or *incarnations*. India was the special home of all that line of thought—India, with its almighty Brahm, brooding over creation, and with him, in a sort of mystic triad, Vishnu, the preserver, who had become incarnate in manifold shapes of life, and Shiva, the destroyer, by whom all things return to Brahm. In India, this original idea of *abstract Deity working by concrete incarnations*, branched out into the grossest and most exuberant of Polytheisms; but, in Greece and Egypt, it arose as a later form of thought in which the classical mythology faded into the Neoplatonism of Alexandria. In that Neoplatonism alike Homer and Moses were allegorized to bring them within the range of its shadowy eclecticism, —Homer shaded off, Moses filled out, until Polytheism and Monotheism blended in that "Triad" or "Trinity" of Plotinus, with its primordial Unity, incomprehensible, ineffable; and, emanating from this, the actual operating powers of the universe—"Intelligence" and "Life."

It was the highest stage in all those old-world religions, short of the Hebrew Monotheism, when men rose out of the finding the Gods in nature's *physical* powers or manifestations into looking for them along the line of *moral* powers or qualities. We see this in the great Persian races, with their great teacher, Zoroaster. To them, the mighty mystery of the world's controlling power was not the mystery of wind or storm, nor of the slowly moving stars, nor even of life and its reproduction; it was the mystery of good and evil. That everlasting conflict of right and wrong, of good and evil, was the conflict of the Gods. Instead of Polytheism with its numberless Deities, instead of Triads and Incarnations and Emanations, we have the Persian Dualism: Ormuzd, the good divinity, and Ahriman, the power of darkness and sin; between these two, and their created hosts of good and evil beings, perpetual warfare; and, in the centre of that warfare, man. In the best of its votaries this system came very close to Monotheism, the worshiper of Ormuzd regarding him as the true Deity, and vague, far-away ideas, coming in here and there, of some final catasrophe, in which Ahriman himself would be turned to goodness, and Ormuzd reign eternally over a regenerated universe. More to our purpose, however, is it, to remember that it was from this Persian Dualism that the Jews, in the period of the Exile, imbibed their belief in the Evil Spirit. In the earlier Jewish times, Satan was simply one of the sons and servants of God, a trier or tempter;—after the captivity, the idea of Satan developed into that of an independent and hostile Devil—thwarting the purposes of God, and waging relentless warfare against man and heaven and good—almost an additional Divinity!

There you have a slight outline of the great forms of religious thought into which man's sense of God was working through the long, slow, ancient centuries, and in the midst of which Christianity rose up and went forth to bear its witness and to speak its word. It was not an entirely new word! I do not think Christ had any idea of proclaiming to the world a new religion. Side by side with these Polytheisms, these Triads, this Dualism, had always been that simple Monotheism which Abraham led his family out of Chaldea to establish, and which Moses led his people out of Egypt to restore. And a grand religion it was; grand in its simplicity, grand in it moral earnestness! "Hear, O Israel, the Eternal,* thy God, the Eternal is One!" And again, "The Eternal, the Eternal God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, bearing with iniquity, transgression and sin, but that will by no means clear the guilty!" With all the hardness of that Hebrew Monotheism—and its very earnestness often degenerated into cruel hardness; with all its fallings away—and they were many—from its best purity, it does stand out in a strange light. And this was Christ's religion—only, this, touched with such a light of loving tenderness and realizing faith, as made what he taught seem like an altogether new thing among men! It was not merely "One God" that his soul was full of, but "One God, the Father." Over all, in all, was this great, wonderful presence! Shining in the glory of the lilies, making beautiful the faces of little children, touching the loathsome forms of sin and disease with a light of holy meaning, making the very sparrows dear to him, as also the little children of that great Father-life—arching over all things was the presence and love of God! Over all, and in all—the ever-present Spirit—waiting to bless every child of man; not, as his people had used to think, an inspiration to some mighty Prophet here and there, but the comforter, the teacher, the helper to every receptive soul! All mysticism, as of a presence to be gained by special methods of initiation or approach; all exclusiveness, as of a blessing to some favored race, were done away, as he looked up into that light of Divine love; simply "Blessed are the pure in heart, for

*The Jewish translation, coming much nearer to the original meaning than the "Lord" of the common English version.

they shall see God." It was not only as the glory of his own life that he clasped God to him. It seems to me one of the saddest mistakes men have made, to read Christ's words of his own close, wonderful life with God: the Father dwelling in him, and he in the Father, "I and my Father are one," and so forth, as if they were the expressions of some exceptional relation to God, on his own part, which made him quite other than Man. There was not one of those great words which he did not also use of what *might* be to every one of his disciples. They, too, might be one with God; they, too, might feel what it was to dwell in God; they, too, might feel the world folded about in that Heavenly Father's light and presence!

Something like this was Christ's thought of God—something like this—only greater, tenderer! One infinite Spirit! In the sense of *that*, all the old feeling of his being nearest to man in some special holy place was lost. In the sense of that, all priestly methods of drawing his attention seemed trivial. No room for speculations about his nature—no need for outward symbolizing of his Being! No room for any other in his all-absorbing presence! Even the Devil, which in the Jewish idea had been coming to occupy a place of almost independent lordship, really approaching to the Persian Dualism, sinks back into insignificance: "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from Heaven!" he cried, once; and the whole world of Earth and Heaven, brought close together, was filled with that One Infinite Spirit, to which his whole heart and life went out in that one dear name—"Our Father!"

Such was the Unity of God as Christ felt it, and tried to show it to men, that all men might feel it and be helped and saved by it.

But, alas! the thought of it which he left did not long remain pure. Paul warned men against being corrupted from "the simplicity of Christ," and yet even Paul did not himself keep *quite* close to it! And when, largely by Paul's preaching, Christ's thought of God went out far and wide among the peoples, it gradually got changed and changed, till Christ himself would hardly have known it! The teaching of Christ and the gospel came among the heathens, familiar with the thought of many Gods, in different orders, and some walking among men in human likeness; and straightway the idea rose up among them: This Jesus was surely such a God! It came into the midst of the Alexandrine Neoplatonism, with its Triad of the unapproachable Essence, and of the two emanations of "Intelligence" and "Life;" and Neoplatonism not only took up the growing thought that Christ was God, but showed just how he was the very emanation of "Life;" and, making out that the Holy Spirit he had spoken so much of was the other emanation of "Divine Intelligence," gradually worked up the Christian doctrine of the Trinity! Meanwhile, from other quarters came back the influence of that old oriental Dualism, raising again into prominence the idea of a sort of independent power of absolute evil, and ascribing such success to the Devil as virtually to make him out a God. And from some of the old by-currents of Polytheism came up that other curious element, the craving for the tender, womanly element in Deity; and as, in the growth of dogmatism and controversy in the Church, the thought of God became more hard and abstract and severe, that craving fastened on the veneration for the gentle Mary, gradually glorified her into the Mother of God, set her on one of the highest thrones in the imaginary courts of Heaven, and here on earth adopted the very statues of the Egyptian Isis with her son Horus in her arms, to become thenceforth the image of the Virgin and Child!

It was in these ways that that grand, simple Unity of God—the One Infinite Spirit whom Christ taught men to call Father—was gradually broken up again as it were by the insidious influence of the world's Polytheisms, and Triads, and Dualisms, and Incarnations. The wonder is it was not utterly lost! It was almost lost! At times the Christian church got utterly sunk in the merest theological hair-splitting, the merest controversies about words and terms that stood for no real living thought of God at all! When all Christendom was at daggers drawn as to whether "the Son" should be spoken of as "made" or as "begotten;" or as to whether the Holy Ghost proceeded from the Father and the Son, or from the Father only—oh, how far had men got from that simple, loving piety in which Christ felt, in all and over all, one infinite, ever-present Father-Spirit!

But here is the beautiful thing: in the Gospels there was always the image of that grand, simple thought of Christ's! In spite of words and phrases here and there, which had crept in after Christ's time, that image of Christ's thought of the Infinite Father-Spirit stood out unmistakably, to any one who would just go back to him, not to find proof-texts of creed, but just to see what Christ did think and feel, and how Christ prayed. There have always been some who have done this; and in the darkest age there was always the light still quietly shining. And some saw it; reformation after reformation started in the thoughts of lowly, Christlike

souls, and each stripped off some element of the corruptions which had overlaid Christ's pure, spiritual Monotheism, and came a little nearer to his tender, spiritual faith. First, men insisted less on their old distinctions and definitions about God; then left off speaking of them, looked up to Him simply with the little child's thought and word, "*Our Father*," and, as they have looked into that thought and word, they have found it filling out with life and meaning, till it included in its large simple unity all the fulness of God!

I think that the whole Christian world—of Protestantism at least—is rapidly coming, to-day, to this larger, simpler faith in the Unity of God. It is not so much that the old theological systems, which divided this Unity in the ways I have described, are being formally abandoned before categorical disproof, as that they are fading out of men's living thought before a larger sense of what the Infinite Life must be! Men have not absolutely given up believing in the Devil; but it is no longer in any such distinct or living fashion as to constitute a sort of Divine Dualism. Men still use the old phrases which Neoplatonism worked up into the "Trinity;" but over all grows more and more that one grand name—the Heavenly Father—not as the theological expression for one person or element in Deity, but as the richest, fullest word for the whole great thought! The old expressions of the Trinity are not insisted on as they used to be; they are not particularized as they used to be. There is a growing distaste for all attempts at minute definitions of the Divine. Even Luther wrote: "The word 'Trinity' is never found in the divine records, but is only of human invention. Far better would it be to say *God* than *Trinity*." And Calvin said: "I dislike this vulgar prayer, 'Holy Trinity, one God, have mercy upon us,' as altogether savoring of barbarism. We repudiate such expressions as not only insipid but profane." In the present day, such expressions have almost disappeared from prayer, and it is very seldom, even in the most orthodox churches, that prayer is offered except to "God," or to "our Heavenly Father." What must we say of a doctrine which men can neither find in the Bible nor take with them into their prayers? Say? Why, that it is a doctrine of human invention, which has made our Heavenly Father's face not clearer, but obscurer; and that what we most of all want is to get back to Christ's thought and word. "Lord, shew us the Father," Our hearts cry out; Not the Creator, only, nor the King, still less the mystic Trinity—"Shew us *the Father*, and it sufficeth us."

It is not that men have less faith, and so want to take refuge in greater vagueness, it is that they have more reverence and I think more intellectual humility. We have largely to thank science for that humility. Science has given men such glimpses of the vast and awful forces which are moving even in the outer folds of Nature, that when we try to get back of these to that still greater Mystery of which these forces are the movements and the method, we can but fold our hands in an awe that shrinks from words. From all mere words of *definition*, at any rate; the words that come home to our hearts to-day are those which simply utter the feelings of life's holiest, tenderest hours, and shadow forth an Almighty Presence of love and care, and slowly-moving, beneficent will. Perhaps, if I should seek for the passage which most of all others in modern literature suggests the kind of thought of God which is taking the place of the old statements, I should find it in those lines of Wordsworth's:

> ——"I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
> A motion and a spirit that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things."

Ah, here is the meeting-place of all our thoughts! Here is that large Unity in which all creeds may blend! Yes, and in which those who can form no shape of creed may join! It is worth remembering that these very words—which one of the most religious men I know quoted to me a while ago, as the words, of all others, which best describe the true thought of God—are also the very words in which Professor Tyndall finally closed that great Belfast Address of his. That address seemed, as men first listened to it, to fold all that is in the hard grasp of an exhaustive materialism, and to leave not even any place for God. But the greatest scientists know and frankly own how all their science leaves the ultimate reality still untouched, while yet it is close at hand, touching them in the beauty of every flower and in the secret power of every form of life. And it is surely greatly suggestive, that such a master of science, casting about for words to suggest that which cannot be defined, should find it in these lines of tenderest and most adoring aspiration! Here, in that one great thought, which breathed in Christ's words, "a Spirit" and "Our Father," and to which the tenderest modern thinking still comes back, is the great help to life! With *that* thought in our hearts, we tread with firmer step the ways alike of duty and worship. Even science as it takes us to the end of its seeing, bows down with reverence before mysterious Life; and there Christ takes us by the hand and shows us *the Father*, and whispers, "Let us pray!"

TABLE TALK.

BY ROBERT COLLYER.

The sight we saw in Chicago last Sunday must be of more than a passing interest, I think, to those who watch the drift and temper of the times. A theater crowded to the uttermost by our fellow-citizens, meeting to welcome the arch-champion of atheism, and hear whatever he had to say, and the champion, if we may judge, at his best. Applause and laughter so perpetual that whatever the speaker may have set out to do, the address reads more like a fusilade of epigrams than a well-knitted and well-shaped speech. Of epigrams, also, with a very bitter tang to them, and all too bare of charity toward those who differ, though bitterness and bigotry are especially disclaimed by the speaker, who, as I am fain to believe, would not like to be branded with the same big B as some bear who hate or fear him, but would only be ruthless in his dealings with the things which prevent the world about him from being very much of the speaker's mind. So you say he may be sincere in these professions, while you feel it is a sincerity which is not charitable, and this begets the wonder whether this is a charity which is sincere—turn back on the track—pick up sentences again—put this and that together, and find the bitter taste remains. A good man, whose whole life was the voucher for the worth of his word, used to say, "If you must fall into any extreme, let it be on the side of gentleness;" but Mr. Ingersoll was certainly far enough from this spirit last Sunday. I spent the best part of a morning with him, some years ago, on a train it was one of the pleasantest mornings I ever spent with any man in my life. This gentleness one loves so in a man of his mould was in him then swaying through the breeze of our good-natured contention, as the blue-bells sway in the wind on the New Hampshire hills, holding all their sweetness intact, and balancing themselves on their slender stems through storm and shine. I would not misjudge one for whom I have nourished a most genuine regard, but I do not find this gentle spirit and purpose anywhere within my friend's talk last Sunday. He seemed to me, on that morning long ago, to be like a lake I know of in Switzerland, all to itself and dark with the vast shadows of the mountains, yet very winsome as you look down into and across the pure green deeps, and apt to light up wonderfully as it catches, now and then, a glimpse of the sun; but the similitude did not fit the speech we heard last Sunday. One did not expect to find quite the same man, to be sure, because he must have been a standing witness against his own doctrine that there is nothing superhuman or other *than* human in the highest life we touch, if "tremendous applause," perpetual laughter, and almost any price he could ask for the work he has been doing, had not lowered the standard and coarsened the substance of his talk through all this time. It does seem to me that this is what has happened. Something has broken. The spirit is not in him which charmed me so that day, or is overlaid and lost. He plays to the "Bowery boys. There is no deep calling unto deep. The gentle might which holds its own and mirrors what light it may for those about, is lost. His speech strikes one rather as the fitful rush and leap of turbid waters. I have heard how a gentleman went to see him once in Peoria, and finding a fine copy of Voltaire in his library, said, "Pray, sir, what did this cost you?" "I believe it cost me the governorship of the State of Illinois," was the swift answer. I cannot but recall the incident as he stands in the light of last Sunday. He seems to be saying to himself, as he sees those about him who will send his words flying far and wide next day, "It is my turn now, and I mean to square the account with you Christian folk once for all. I will dethrone your God, blow him down the wind on the wings of my epigrams, and disprove his existence by popular acclaim—start a crusade today which shall blot out the heavens, shut up the churches, silence the immemorial prayers, slay all the hopes that strive after something more, and show that man

> "Is blown about the desert dust,
> Or sealed within the iron hills."

Now, since we first knew Robert by report, there has been a time when those who can only believe in the Eternal God as a rather helpless little brother, and themselves as the big brother who is bound to stand up for him, might have felt there was grave danger in such a sight as we have witnessed.

He was clothed once in a fine austerity, went on his lonely way quite content, as I make out, to give grave and serious reasons for rejecting what so many hold dearer than their life, and faithful to his instinct and insight, though such ovations as were given him, as Dr. Dyer used to say of the old abolitionists, took the form mainly of rotten eggs. I know more than one man who, in those days, nourished a deep and most tender regard for him, and found something very noble in the stand he made, for the best a man can do are he who has to abide so utterly alone. But Robert roystering round as the popular advocate of atheism at $25,000 a year, as

the common report goes, is quite another sort of man. No doubt the laborer is worthy of his hire, and some of us may not be much better, according to the old proverb that it is "money makes the mare go," who stand on the other side. Still, as this turns the fine edge of our endeavor and makes us weak for good, so it must be with Robert, making him weak for what I cannot but believe to be evil. The wedge of gold always spoils the fighting power, be it hidden never so deftly. He is no more now than the "second batch" of reformers, who argued lustily for a reformation while they grew rich on the church lands; than an archbishop arguing for his tithes; than the old slaveholding clergy at the South arguing for the "divine institution." So Robert in motley, trying to laugh the deep and most sacred convictions of men down the mind, under the guise of girding at the Pentateuch (for we must thank him for the frankness with which he tells us this is his ultimate aim), is a very different man to the quiet, manful fellow we used to hear of who won such regard from those who could at all understand him. The man in the ring, whose sole business is to make you laugh, makes no converts, even to rough riding. And there is ground for neither hope nor fear as we stand on that side or this about the advance of atheism, so long as this remains the best method of its choicest champions. This serious race of ours can weigh such advocacy at its true worth easily. It is only as the crackling of thorns under a pot.

The readers of UNITY will be glad to see this sweet and tender strain, newly sung by a young friend of mine, in preference to any more "talk" this week:

THE THORN IN THE FLESH.

There is a thorn in every life
  Which some dread agent planted there,
  And all our earthly days must bear,
Which makes the half of all our strife.

Perchance the ugly seed was sown
  In some far-off and wretched years,
  While mediate souls have 'scaped the tears
For a sad offspring not their own.

Or haply, in our being's morn,
  We sowed unwisely, thence to find,
  Among good growth of other kind,
The hardy increase of the thorn—

Which leastwise strengthens with our day,
  And swells as it begets our grief,
  Nor comes the comfort of belief
That years will wear the germ away.

This is the enemy within,
  Whose vantage-ground is stronger far
  Against our souls in evil's war
Than all the outward toils of sin.

To battle this is noblest strife,
  Albeit we hold it but at bay
  And have scant peace along the way,
Till we have reached the other life.

To battle this is noblest war,
  And in reward of good defense
  Immediate do our powers commence
To wax them stronger than before.

And looking final from the ground
  Of fair advantage o'er the ill,
  Some grains of worth our souls will fill,
Which haply had not else been found.

And, oh! methinks the Father saw
  The gathering hazard of the years,
  Which in the mortal's share appears,
And blendeth with his being's law;

Saw how the cumbered soul must meet
  A harder warfare than the rest,
  And willed the heart be fully blessed,
When all his hardships were complete.

Each thorn the Maker could foretell,
  (Else sowing did not wisely sow,)
  And through the mystery did foreknow
How the last reaping would be well;

Marked the far-reaching germs of ill
  In the foreshortening of the years,
  Forth shooting into sin and tears,
Nor yet without his final will,

Which saw ennobled lives between,
  And many healing streams applied,
  And one meek Savior crucified;
While slowly out of agents mean

Arose the new and better man
  Triumphant final in the strife,
  And crowning with a tempered life
The meaning of the Father's plan.

Not till his plans have wisest length
  Will his strong word the soul release,
  And sheltered weakness doth increase
The glory of his perfect strength.

This doth suffice for all our need,
  To struggle with our seeded sin,
  Whose thorn withheld had left to win
No sweetness of the heavenly meed.

B. BULKLEY.

CHICAGO, March 28, 1879.

TRUE REFORMS.

Mrs. Anna Garlin Spencer, wife of Rev. W. H. Spencer, of Haverhill, recently delivered before the Free Religious Society of Providence, a masterly essay on "Liberty vs. License," which was published in the *Index*. It was called forth by the recent schism in the Liberal League, on the question of postal laws,

but it covered the general principles of social reforms. Mrs. Spencer left no doubt as to her position. She said "Free religious organizations, if they are to live, must define themselves on the great problems of morals." The paper throughout shows the highest standard of morality and purity. She says :

"My friends, be not deceived. There is a cant of 'reform' and 'progress,' as well as a cant of 'conservatism' and 'established order,'—a cant to me more insufferable than any other, because more inconsistent and shallow. That a law or condition or belief is old, is no sign in itself that such is wrong ; that a law, condition, or belief is new, is no sign that such is right."

Put your so-called reform "in the witness box, and question and cross-question it as to its motive principles. 'Are you, O audacious theory, daring to oppose yourself to the practice of ages? are you the mistress of license or the wife of liberty? Are you trying to get outside the dominion of law, or are you appealing from the letter to the spirit of law? Do you disobey the lower, that the higher obligation may be sacred, and for that reason alone? Are you so in love with your own individuality that you self-confidently oppose it to the united will of your kind, or do you yield in fearful reverence to the impulsion of the hidden law within, and only because that bids you to so take issue with the world?' Then, after thus searching the heart of the so-called reform, we must examine it in its history lesson. 'Have you, O thought child of to-day, been to the school of ages? Have you traced out your lineal ancestry, and can you prove by your pedigree your right to existence and control? Have you historical proof that you are the 'next thing' in moral growth?"

If the questioned reform can clearly prove to the mind open to conviction that, first, its motive principle is obedience to a growing ideal of goodness rather than a desire to gratify wilful impulses ; and, secondly, that it is a logical link in that growing ideal, we may safely pledge to it our supreme devotion. If, on the contrary, the movement bearing the sacred name of 'Progress' be found to be at heart the *lust of unbridled license of self-expression at the expense of social order*, or if it be found to be an *abnormal* and *ephemeral disease* of *reaction* from *abuses of the past*, then he must oppose it with equal devotion.

It seems to me that never before in any country or time, was there such pressing need to apply these tests to self-styled reforms as in America of to-day. Our soil is new and rank ; weeds and flowers of thought grow with equal luxuriance. Our institutions breed free speculation, and free speculation reaches wise or foolish conclusions according to the trained capacity to reason, and depth of true culture, or the lack of these qualities, in the speculator. Our air stimulates to quick and easy revolt against existing laws, and revolt is good or evil in its results according to the strength or weakness of the moral life of the revolutionist."

Mrs. Spencer then applies these severe tests at considerable length to reforms in education, labor and the family. Once more she says :

"The line of real historic development of social order is in the direction of more and more sacrificing the personal wish to the combined wisdom and the good of the whole. True reform in social conditions is that which fills the body of home which law has made with the soul of a self-ruled virtue. True reform in marriage is to intensify the feeling of responsibility to the future respecting it ; it is to purge the decisions leading to it, more and more of sensuality ; it is to call wisdom as well as love into the high council chamber that determines the happiness or unhappiness of two human beings, and fatefully predicts the inheritance of others. The appeal of the true reform is always to the sense of duty, not to the power of the personal wish. They who lead the race to higher revelations of truth and nobler devotions to right do so always by the one road of unselfish consecration to the law of truth and right. And true reformers show only cautious and fearful tampering with those statute rules of human conduct which have been slowly deduced from the experience of ages. True reformers only break with existing laws and conditions for the purpose of building wider and more stately dwelling places for the growing *idea* whose germ they find in such laws and conditions. Increasing liberty is only found in more perfect obedience to better understood and expressed law. All else which bears the sacred name of liberty is license in masquerade. Revolt against the world's commands is only justified when those commands prohibit us from obeying a higher law. Radical religion, if it means anything, means the attempt to work out in actual life the theories of rational, philosophic, thought respecting government, moral standards, and personal virtue. Speculation is not life ; scientific investigation is not practice ; but religion is living, vital practical devotion to whatever ideals of right and truth we hold."

UNITARIANISM IN AMERICA.

We have nowhere seen the growth and influence of Unitarianism, in this country, better stated than by C. W. Wendte, in a letter to the *Cincinnati Gazette*. He writes, of course, in no sectarian spirit, but in defence of a body which the *Gazette* had underrated. He says the first church the pilgrim fathers planted in this country, "the congregation organized at Leyden, Holland, and reorganized at Plymouth, Mass., in 1620, has in the course of years and the evolution of faith become Unitarian in its belief and fellowship, although it still, I believe, retains its old covenant, which is of astonishing breadth and liberality compared with those of many of our modern orthodox churches. The original Puritan Church, at Salem, Mass., organized in 1629, those at Watertown, Roxbury and Dorchester, formed in the following year, and the First and

Second churches of Boston, have all become Unitarian in their faith and worship. In all, this denomination holds thirty-nine of the ancient Puritan societies organized previous to the year 1700. The last seven Presidents of Harvard College have been of this faith. The City of Boston, once the stronghold of Puritanism, now has thirty-one Unitarian congregations, or more than any other similar denomination." Mr. Wendte claims that the Unitarian denomination has been the most influential in forming popular character and institutions of any in America, and adds: "Where among the religious teachers of this country will you find more influential names than Dr. Channing, Drs. Dewey, A. P. Peabody, Jas. Freeman Clarke, H. W. Bellows, Theodore Parker, O. B. Frothingham, Robt. Collyer, Wm. R. Alger, and Ralph Waldo Emerson (formerly a minister in Boston)? The radical thought of these men, and others like them, is the leaven that keeps the lump of American religious life from becoming hard and dry and sour. Look again at American literature, and you will find it thoroughly Unitarian in its moral outlook. Four of our leading American poets, W. C. Bryant, H. W. Longfellow, Jas. Russell Lowell, and Oliver Wendell Holmes belong to this church. So also do our six leading historians—viz: Geo. Bancroft, J. Lothrop Motley, W. H. Prescott, Richard Hildreth, F. Parkman, and Jared Sparks. In general literature we find such names as E. P. Whipple, George Ticknor, Bayard Taylor, Bret Harte, Margaret Fuller, Lydia Maria Child, Henry Thoreau, Maria Mitchell, Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney, James T. Fields, Fanny Kemble and Charlotte Cushman. In the walks of philanthrophy, the following, among others, are Unitarians: Dorothea Dix (worthy counterpart of Florence Nightingale, Mary Carpenter, and Francis Power Cobb, in England), Dr. S. G. Howe, Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, Samuel J. May, Abbott Lawrence, Peter Cooper, E. E. Hale, and Horace Mann. Among public men and jurists, three Presidents were Unitarian, John Adams, John Quincy Adams, and Millard Filmore. Also Edward Everett, Samuel Dexter, Christopher Gore, Fisher Ames, Henry Wheaton, Daniel Webster (up to the time of his death a member of the Brattle Street Unitarian Church, Boston,) John C. Calhoun, Judge Story, Chief Justice Theophilus Parsons, Charles Sumner, Gov. John A. Andrew, Geo. Wm. Curtis, Justices Wayne and Miller, of the Supreme Court; Secretary of War McCrary, and many others. Surely this is a roll of honor which no other denomination in America can equal." In the same letter Mr. Wendte has a good word on the true descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers. He says: "Eight years ago a body of orthodox clergymen planted their feet on Plymouth Rock and swore renewed fealty to the creeds of the Pilgrim Fathers. It was an imposing and yet a melancholy spectacle. For the true way to reverence and represent the Puritans of New England is not to sit by their crumbling sepulchres and hug their dead bones, but to follow their risen spirit into new truth and new applications of truth in Church, State and Home. Puritanism as a creed, a church, or a social institution, is obsolete, and rapidly passing from the scene; but the Puritan spirit, that diviner temper and moral starting point of our religious fathers, their lofty trust in God, their loyalty to the laws, their respect for the majesty of conscience, their emphasis of the right and duty of private judgment, their belief in the priceless value of every individual soul—these constituted the true interior and animating spirit of Puritanism."

MR. HEYWOOD'S BOOK.

THE UNITARIAN BANNER, and other sermons, by John H. Heywood, minister of the Church of the Messiah, Louisville, Ky., with the portrait of the author.

In this modest volume of a hundred pages, our brother Heywood has given to a larger public ten of the sermons with which he has quickened the religious life of his congregation and city. The little book is characteristically dedicated "to the friends on earth and in heaven who, during thirty-eight years of pastoral work, have endeared Louisville to him." It is difficult to speak otherwise than in warm praise of anything this beloved St. John of our liberal ministry at the west may write, so transparently beautiful is the spirit which shines through all his work, so genuine the admiration his long and faithful service in a trying field of labor calls out in all who are acquainted with its abundant and beneficent results.

This little publication has, however, a merit of its own in the clearness and vigor of its thought and the warmth and breadth of its sympathy. It is an excellent presentation of what a devout and catholic-hearted Unitarian of the old or conservative school has to say on the great topics of religious thought and life. The preface tells us that it was written in answer to the question, "What do you and your church believe?" and at the same time "to indicate the general and characteristic thought of Unitarians in regard to the divine character and government, the spirit and work of our Saviour, and upon the great themes of life, duty and immortality."

The collection derives its title from the first discourse on Ps. xx: 5—"In the name of our God we will set up our banners," and which is an elucidation of the cardinal points of Unitarian christianity. Of a similar nature is sermon No. IV., called "The Faith of a Unitarian Christian." Other titles are: "Differentiation of Christianity, a Plea for Denominationalism against Sectarianism;" "Survival of the Fittest, or the Church and Society of the Future:" "Two Aspects of the World's Providence;" "Righteousness, or Life on the Square;" "Foregleams of Immortality," etc. Of all these discourses it may justly be said that they are full of "sweetness and light;" that their style is simple and clear, and vitalized by emotional intensity and moral earnestness. The supernaturalism of the writer rarely appears in them. His variance from the more radical school of thinkers seems to be in phrase rather than in sentiment, as the following noble passage shows: "Science, in showing the regularity, uniformity and

wide sweep of the laws by which the Creator governs the universe, saves religion from narrowness, one-sidedness, capriciousness and superstition; and religion, in revealing the nearness, the indwelling presence, the immediate and constant action of God, saves science from bondage to unintelligent law, and makes the universe all luminous and warm with divine light and love."

In brief, the purpose of this little book is to teach that the law of religious thought is reason, the soul of piety is love, and the true basis of human life is righteousness. Such is the ideal of religion which Jesus Christ presents to us, and such the motto that is emblazoned on the Unitarian banner. C. W. W.

ST. LOUIS NOTES.

Mr. Snyder has recently taken active part in a controversy with the Catholics, in which he has refreshed Father Phelan, and some others, doubtless, with some forgotten facts in the history of that redoubtable church. Phelan (editor of the *Western Watchman*) says lamely enough that on account of pressure of duties he didn't look up the matter and guard his statements as he should have done; in short, that the pope's infallibility doesn't extend to the priest. Nevertheless he says "*burning was never too good for such as he (Mr. Snyder)*".

Dr. Eliot says in a public letter: "In forty-five years I have yet to have the first religious or sectarian controversy with any church or individual."

Dr. Sonnenschein has made use of Knappert's "Religion of Israel," as a text-book in his course of Sabbath-school instruction.

Mr. Harris' influence in the field of speculative philosophy in this city is fully maintained. Recently two able addresses have been made by him, one on the subject of "Immortality," the other discussing "The Method of Social Science,"—both run in the mould of Hegelian thought. The "Kant Club," which is this winter studying Hegel, consists of Messrs. Harris, Holland, Garland, Cooke and Vickroy. Miss Bibb was a member until she was appointed to a professorship in the State University of Mo. It meets Saturday evenings. The "Aristotle Club" consists of Mr. Harris, Dr. Dean, Mr. Soldan and Mr. Class. It convenes Sunday evenings, and has been reading the "De Anima," and giving considerable attention to the scholastic interpretation of the Stagyrite. The last session was occupied with "A Letter on the Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas," translated from the *Jour. Spec. Phil.* by Mr. Davidson of Cambridge. Mr. D. J. Snider, the Shakspearean student, who was formerly a member of this club, is now in Greece. Mr. Krœger and Mr. Brockmeyer (the translator of Fichte) though no longer meeting with the clubs, are still at work, each in his own sphere and way.

The Washington University is doing more each year for general and special culture in this city. Its Art School has greatly enlarged its facilities, and will soon have a fine building for its special work. Illustrated lectures have been given to the public this season on Architecture, Music, Painting and Poetry. Courses on French Literature, Botany and Paleo-Zoology are included in the year's plans. Great opportunities are soon to be opened for the instruction of youth in manual and industrial work. Indeed, the University is the practical center of the best and broadest culture in St. Louis. J. C. L.

St. Louis, March 11, '79.

CONFERENCES.

The fraternity of Illinois Liberal Religious Societies and the Iowa Unitarian Association, will hold a joint session with the Unitarian Church of Davenport, Iowa, to commence Tuesday evening, April 15th, and continue through the 16th and 17th. Delegates are requested to send their names to the Pastor, Rev. S. S. Hunting, 1,017 Main street.

Those arriving Tuesday, will be received by a committee at the Burtis House.

Sermons and Essays on various subjects of practical value will be given, and will be followed by free discussion. A cordial welcome will be given to all who wish to attend.

The programme is as follows: Tuesday, April 15, 7:30 p. m., Conference Sermon: Rev. Robert Collyer, Chicago. Wednesday, April 16, 9:00 a. m., Devotional meeting: Led by R. L. Herbert, Geneva, Ill. 10:00 a. m., Organization. 10:30 a. m., Historic Origins and Historic Criticism: Essay by Dr. Thomas Kerr, Rockford, Ill. 11:30 a. m., The Cost of Beauty: Sermon by Rev. J. V. Blake, Quincy, Ill. 2:00 p. m., Freedom in Christ: Essay by Rev. J. L. Douthit, Shelbyville, Ill. 3:00 p. m., Unitarian Needs: Essay by Miss M. A. Safford, Hamilton, Ill. 7:30 p. m., A Fundamental Question in Religion: Sermon by Rev. R. L. Herbert. Thursday, April 17, 9:00 a. m., Devotional Service: Led by Rev. O. Clute, Iowa City, Ia. 9:30 a. m., How Shall We Advance the Cause of Temperance: Essay by Mrs. C. A. Ingraham, Algona, Ia. 10:30 a. m., Our Duties of To-day: Essay by Rev. Wm. S. Balch, Dubuque, Ia. 11:30 a. m., The New Religion: Essay by Rev. J. M. Miller, Geneseo, Ill. 2:00 p. m., Inspiration: Essay by Rev. Wm. W. Nutting, Cedar Rapids, Ia. 3:00 p. m., Something that Unitarian Churches ought to stand for: Essay by Rev. J. R. Effinger, Des Moines, Ia. 7:30 p. m., Platform Meeting.

KERSEY H. FELL, Pres., Bloomington, Ill.

C. COVELL, Buda, Illinois,
Mrs. T. C. COLE, Mt. Pleasant, Ia., } Secretaries.
March 15, 1879.

Will the readers of the UNITY in the west bear in mind the Western Conference which meets in Cincinnati the 6th, 7th and 8th of next month. It is expected that reduction of rates can be secured on the principal railroads, and the Cincinnati people offer generous hospitality, and expect a large attendance. To those who have been in the habit of attending the Western Conference meetings, no word need be said, but to such as have not, we take this early occasion to remind you that it is time to begin making plans to go to Cincinnati. Especially to societies whose pastors have too small salaries to enable them to attend at their own expense, do we wish to give a hint as to the excellent work you would do if, quietly and without their knowing about it, you would raise funds to send them. The past year has perhaps been the best year that Liberal thought and work in the west has ever seen, and the Conference at Cincinnati should be one of unusual interest. J. T. SUNDERLAND, Sec'y.

LIBERAL WORKERS.

J. W. Porter and others of Greeley, Col., lately raised money and obtained three free lectures from W. K. Alger, of Denver, one on "Chivalry," and two on "Liberal Christianity."

Mr. Sample writes from Grand Haven, Mich.; "Our Sunday School is increasing, our congregations are large—the largest for years, since the first starting of Mr. Houghton's pastorate, they tell me."

The Humboldt *Cosmos* reports that the people of Algona "have made arrangements for monthly sermons and lectures by Rev. J. R. Effinger, of Des Moines. Some of the best citizens of Algona are prominent in this liberal movement."

Mr. Blake's beautiful Easter service for Sunday Schools and Churches is now ready, and can be obtained at the office of UNITY. Its responsive readings and music are very appropriate and fine as we might expect. Price 40 cts. per dozen, or $2.50 per hundred.

Prof. W. K. Clifford, the able mathematician and brilliant radical writer, whose articles in the *Fortnightly Review and Nineteenth Century* have attracted such notice, died recently at the age of thirty-four.

James Russell Lowell in his official dispatches reports a bull fight to which all Madrid seemed to go. He says: "I attended officially, as a matter of duty, and escaped early. It was my first bull-fight, and will be my last. To me it was a shocking and brutalizing spectacle, in which all my sympathies were on the side of the bull."

Brooke Herford, M. J. Savage and other liberal preachers have been saying good words for the theater this winter. G. W. Cutter, of Buffalo, adds his in a sermon on "The Pulpit and the Stage," published in full in the *Courier*. He emphasizes the duty of the church in discriminating between the good and bad on the stage.

A correspondent of the Chicago *Times* announces a Congregational council at Sylvania, O., "before which Rev. Ira C. Billman, pastor of Plymouth Church here, will be cited to answer charges of heresy. Mr. Billman has shown strong Unitarian tendencies, has preached acceptably to members of that faith in Chicago, and recently received a call from a church of that denomination in Jackson."

London Truth says that "Dean Stanley is scarcely more of a Christian (in any definable sense of the word) than M. Renan. It is a puzzle to thoughtful persons how a moral purist can really conceive himself justified in drawing the pay of an establishment, the doctrines of which are to him so many figures of speech. To him the miraculous passage of the Red Sea is a natural phenomenon, exaggerated by Jewish pride into a preternatural marvel; the obedience of the sun to Joshua a fine but strictly poetical idea. In truth, Dean Stanley might be described as a secular saint."

Wm. Howitt who died at Rome, March 3d, belonged to the liberal workers. Both he and his wife Mary Howitt were educated as Quakers. His "History of Priestcraft," published in 1834 with great success, was even polemical in tone, and brought him into active relation with the liberals of the day. His manifold writings since have breathed the liberal spirit. In late years both he and Mary Howitt have been counted as Spiritualists.

A circular announces "A summer school for instruction by conference and conversation in literature and the higher philosophy, will open at the Orchard House of Mr. Alcott, in Concord, Massachusetts, on Tuesday, July 15, 1879, and continue for five weeks." The regular professors will be A. Bronson Alcott, William T. Harris, H. K. Jones, David A. Wasson, Mrs. Ednah D. Cheney. For terms and particulars address A. B. Alcott, Concord, Mass.

S. S. Hunting, who has for some time been on the Board of Education at Davenport, Ia., was this spring opposed by various interests, Catholic, Orthodox and others. The contest is reported as fierce with "the largest vote ever cast in the city." His opponent running on four tickets won the the election by a small majority; but Mr. Hunting, the liberal candidate, received 1,260 votes. Mr. Hunting promises to give us some time a paper on unsectarian education.

Prof. A. Earthman, of Humboldt College, closed his Sunday evening course of lectures on "The Religious Systems of the World" with one on "Unitarianism." He said: "Faith in God and love to man; love to God and faith in man—these are its beliefs, and no creeds are necessary." The *Humboldt Cosmos* says of his lectures—"No equally long course of lectures which have ever been given here, nor of sermons either, as for that matter, have uniformly attracted such large audiences as those just finished. For eleven Sunday evenings, irrespective of roads or weather, the schoolroom has been full and the interest has never flagged." Rumors having spread that Prof. Earthman promulgates his theological opinions in the college and requires students to attend these lectures, twenty-nine students, "believing these reports to be circulated for the purpose of injuring the school," published a card declaring "them to be utterly false." The Spring term of the college opens April 9th, and closes June 26th.

The list of women in the pulpit and on the platform increases. Mrs. Baker, of Janesvile, recently occupied Mr. Jones' pulpit, and Abby Sage Richardson had one Sunday evening previously. Miss Ella Giles, of Madison, and Mrs. Amelia Bate, of Milwaukee, are lecturing this winter, and the *New Covenant* publishes a paper read by Mrs. M. H. Lord in the society of Olympia Brown, at Racine. Miss Mary Eastman, of Massachusetts, has preached in various churches this winter, and at the conclusion of her sermon in Robt. Collyer's church, he remarked, "Hawthorne said many years ago that the coming preacher would be a woman. We shall all believe now that it was a prophecy, and, after listening to-night, we preachers of the other sex are glad we got our chance to speak in first."

J. L. Douthit's little pamphlet on "the Creeds or Christ," has aroused the wrath of a Presbyterian minister of Shelbyville, B. Mills by name, who comes to the defence of his "confession of faith," and to the annihilation of Mr. Douthit, in "an open letter," full of abusive terms. Mr. Douthit replies in a kindly and manly tone. Mr. Mills, to prove that "Christ is very God," had quoted the usual texts from John; Mr. Douthit replies from the same John, "no man hath seen God at any time." Mr. Mills had said in rebuke that the Presbyterians had helped to build Mr. Douthit's church; Mr. Douthit gratefully acknowledges it, but insists on being not the less sincere for it, and says the principles of that church in Shelbyville "are not for sale at any price."

J. T. Sunderland, of Ann Arbor, has been lecturing Sunday afternoons at Ypsilanti on "Salvation," "Wm. C. Bryant," and "Bayard Taylor." A Michigan paper reports that when he gave two lectures in Ionia, the Congregational church, which Unitarians had helped to build, was refused to his audience, on the ground that Unitarians "do not believe as we do." The *Christian Register* reports that Mr. Sunderland's work at Ann Arbor "has had a most gratifying beginning. The Sunday congregations grew steadily for the first two months, and have since as steadily held their own. The Students' Inquiry Class has had more than two hundred and fifty different members, and an average attendance of one hundred; but with the closing of the Law Department, this class also will take a long recess."

Bishop Colenso has lately finished the work on "the Pentateuch and Book of Joshua," which he began in 1862. He says, "I have fixed the age of the Deuteronomist in the first years of King Josiah; I have separated the passages due to different writers in the book of Genesis, have determined approximately the age of those writers, viz: the Elohist in the days of Samuel, the second Elohist in the beginning of David's reign, the Jehovist in David's reign and the first part of Solomon's; I have shown that the whole of Leviticus and all priestly portions of Exodus, Numbers, and Joshua, with a few verses in Deuteronomy, were written during or after the Captivity." The *Athenæum* says "it must be regretted with the learned prelate that he lives far from the homes of learning; consequently he has not seen books and monographs which have appeared within the last three or four years relating directly and indirectly to the subject of his investigations, and which would have led him to modify some of his statements."

The *Ann Arbor Courier* informs us that "the memorial services commemorative of the late Rev. C. H. Brigham, who founded the Unitarian church in this place, and for twelve years was its pastor, were held in the Unitarian Church last Sunday morning, March 16th. The altar was most beautifully draped with floral offerings, while a large oil portrait of the deceased was appropriately placed in full view of the audience he had so often addressed. A brief biographical sketch of his life from the time of his admittance to Harvard college, until he closed his pastorate here, was given by Rev. J. T. Sunderland. Short addresses were delivered by President Angell and Prof. Pettee; and letters were read from Rev. J. L. Jones, of Janesville, Wis.; Revs. Mr. Allen and Shippen, of Boston; Rev. C. G. Howland, of Kalamazoo, and E. B. Wilson, of Salem, Mass All of these letters spoke in the highest eulogistic terms of Mr. Brigham as a man of great and varied literary attainments, whose loss from their denomination will be severely felt. Fortunately for this particular church in this city, they have been enabled to obtain, as Mr. Brigham's successor, Mr. J. T. Sunderland, whose zeal and earnestness in his labors coupled with his acknowledged ability in attracting unusual numbers to that church. It is probable that Mr. E. B. Wilson, to whom Rev. Mr. Brigham left all his lectures and writings, will issue one or more volumes of the same."

John Snyder writes that the St. Louis liberals had begun to think "the millenium was coming," and that "the flood of Christian liberality was going to submerge the highest mountain peaks of sectarianism and we be found floating in the ark of religious tolerance." But it proved "only a little shower." "The Second Baptist Church was burned. We all went to the rescue of course, and offered our churches to the homeless Baptists. The Jewish Synagogue was accepted by our bereaved friends, and at the first Christian service held in this unaccustomed place, Dr. Eliot was present. It happened to be communion Sunday. All the Baptists were overflowing with good fellowship, and the tender recollection of the kindness shown them, and so they asked the Doctor to remain and partake. As it was an urgent invitation in good faith, the Doctor accepted. I thought the "era of good feeling" had been inaugurated, and that Brother Jones had better be discharged and all missionary efforts suspended. But the tide turned. The Second Baptist Church and its pastor Dr. Boyd have been severely censured for their brotherly conduct. Rev. J. K. Graves, LL.D., a leading clergyman in the denomination, writing of the event, says Dr. Eliot's conduct was "the most monstrous act we ever heard of a man in his sober senses guilty of. And what kind of a Baptist minister is this Mr. Boyd, who knew this man to be an unbaptized infidel—an armed denier of Jesus as a divine being or Savior, an open rejector of his atonement—to go to him in the congregation and especially invite and urge him, in open violation of the law of Christ and the rule of the church, to come forward and commit this high-handed and most flagrant act in the face of Christendom" Mr. Snyder concludes that "Bro. Jones had better continue his labor."

John Weiss was of Jewish ancestry on his father's side, and was once described by a correspondent as "one part flesh and three parts fire." T. W. Higginson writes: "His youthful slenderness, his pallid face, his piercing black eyes, his long black hair, his penetrating voice, might have belonged to Faust or Paracelsus, both favorite heroes of his; and in later years his ampler physique and magnificent head made him one to be singled out among a thousand. All extremes seemed to meet in him; the intensest enjoyment of physical life, the most poetic imagining, the most abtruse departments of study, the highest soarings of only too refined and subtle meditations. His whole genius was Semitic, with that superadded sense of humor which seems rather the outgrowth of modern life. Put him among familiar friends at a summer watering-place, and to say that he was gay is nothing; he was the Lord of Misrule, the wildest of companions. There was nothing that he could not personate, no freak too wild or impulsive to be carried out on the instant. Yet his deep mystical eyes, his vibrating voice, showed that all this was but a part of him: and when Sunday brought the religious emotions into play he held absolutely spell-bound those who had been almost alarmed by his daring exploits. His friends have to mourn in him one of the very most brilliant and original beings whom they have ever known; and one singularly fitted to exert a spell of personal attraction over all those who came very near him." Through his long career as Unitarian minister, opponent of slavery, defender of the rights of woman, preacher, lecturer and essayist, he was singularly faithful. Says Dr. Bartol, "his heroic fidelity to his convictions never flinched. Truth to what he thought in his theology and in the hard days when the Moloch of slavery demanded and secured so many sacrifices for its shrine, he maintained every grain and at whatsoever cost."

SERIES III. **SCHOOL LIFE.** LESSON 1.

BY MRS. F. B. AMES.

PLAY.

"In books or work or healthful play, May my first years be passed,
That I may give, for every day, Some good account at last."

Play is natural: it is one of the appointed ways by which our faculties grow. It should always have in it *fun, variety,* or *rest* for body or mind. It should be carried on with *honor, earnestness, generosity* and *skill.* In some of the degraded parts of large cities, where the children's plays were only imitations of the wickedness around them, and were thus training them to lives of crime, it was found that the teaching of good plays brought into exercise better qualities. Nourish no evil habits even in play!

The Golden Rule of play is *"No fun unless it is fun on both sides."*—(Horace Mann.) Do not play anything you would be ashamed to describe to others. Do not throw stones at birds; nor torment animals or human beings. Do not "hoax" or play tricks. We have no right to amuse ourselves at the expense of others.

The play-ground is itself a school: just the qualities needed in later life can be practised on the play-ground,—the brave, upright, generous qualities.

1. So, play *earnestly,* play all over and all through: one who dawdles at play will be likely to do so at work.

2. Play *generously, and keep good-natured:* do not be easily made "offish." Take a knock or hurt without "getting mad;" Take a failure without having a "croquet sulk." Don't try always to be leader. Who are the real heroes of your play-ground? Give others a chance. Look out for the little fellows and the beginners: how long since you were one? Any boy or girl who does not try to make others happy on the play-ground should be ashamed of his own enjoyment. A generous player can brighten up the whole game and make the others generous; good-nature *catches* even faster than ill-nature.

3. Play *fair:* winning the game is not so important as keeping your honesty. Though in fun, cheating at marbles and at croquet is mean and dishonest. Be the boy or girl that the others want for "umpire," and so arrive at manhood or womanhood with your reputation *made.*

4. Play *skilfully:* all the readiness, presence of mind and quickness of eye and hand, which good games cultivate, will be needed by and by. Do your best even in play.

How good games are spoiled. Sometimes they are spoiled *by the way in which they are played;* as, playing marbles "for keeps"; and the excellent games of base-ball and cricket, when played in the gambling spirit.—Sometimes by not knowing *when to stop.* Playing too long tires instead of resting. If you come from the play-ground sleepy, languid and unfit for study, you have missed the true use of your play.—Sometimes by *playing during hours of work.* That takes the meaning out of play. "If we make a business of trifles, trifles become a business."—(Macaulay.)

A conscience in play. God has put into us all good natural desires: since Play is one of his appointed ways by which our natures grow, we owe it to him that we do not pervert his law by any *misuse* or *excess.* We owe it to others that we use our own good times to serve and make *them* happy. We owe it to ourselves to make play-times *good* times in both senses of the word.

SERIES III. **SCHOOL LIFE.** LESSON 2.

BY MRS. F. B. AMES.

STUDYING.

"My mind to me a kingdom is."

The chief end of study. Study is to acquire knowledge, and also to train the mind. Do not say "I shall never use this or that, why should I study it?" The *chief* use of any study is to strengthen and enlarge the mind; and if you forget most of the rules, definitions and facts you learn, and yet have the *quality of mind* which they help to make, you will have what is most valuable in them. *But you will never get the quality of mind unless you learn the lessons.*

How to study. *Go over and over* a subject, trying both to *remember* and to *understand.* If anything is at first difficult, repeat it ten times, and it is easier; a hundred, and it is still easier; a thousand, and it is "second nature." *Hunt a hard subject down*—through many authors. Learn early to use dictionaries, cyclopædias, maps and other books of reference, in order to understand, as you go along, all allusions and references. Do not study for this recitation or this examination only, but for all time; for your help when you are men and women.

Work without interruption. Do not break off your mental processes, only to begin again with difficulty. Do not talk to others while studying. Do not try, while writing or drawing, to repeat lessons to yourself. *Learn to hold your mind steadily to one thing,* not allowing your thoughts to run off in all directions: you will then find yourself in the possession of that power which comes only from the full control of all your faculties. A clear, well-trained mind is the best possible capital for life. Staying away from school every now and then breaks off the interest and stops mental growth. Don't let parties, visits, the dress-maker, shows, or any chance diversion interfere with regularity in study.

Learn to study under difficulties; when you do not feel well; when something else seems pleasanter; when there is noise and distraction about you. Goethe, finding that noises distracted him, took his book into a boiler-factory and other noisy places, until he could study regardless of his surroundings.

Study with great regard to health. Well regulated study promotes health. The sicknesses of school-children which are attributed to over-study, are generally brought on by other causes, as eating candy, chewing spruce gum, irregular eating, late hours, children's parties, wet feet, playing too hard. Do not study before breakfast, nor within an hour after meals. Sit erect and breathe deeply, while studying. If possible, sit sideways to the window, not facing it. *Use school-hours* and save studying at home. If scholars waste school-hours of study by dawdling, by looking up at every chance noise, or whenever the door opens, or even to listen to recitations not their own, they must study at home to make up lost time.

A conscience in study. You owe it to God to enlarge steadily the mental power he gave you. You owe it to yourself and others,—since you may be sure that, if well fitted for it, you will some day be wanted for work requiring thoroughness and ability. Opportunity waits for the one who is ready.

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Frances L. Roberts, Superintendent.

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The pages heretofore in charge of Mr. Simmons will be continued by F. L. Hosmer, under the title "Scriptures Old and New." Robert Collyer's Table Talk will appear in every number. Mrs. F. B. Ames begins her twelve Sunday-School Lessons on School Life in this paper.

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WESTERN UNITARIAN CONFERENCE.

BASIS OF FELLOWSHIP.

Whereas, We feel the great need of rallying the Liberal mind of the West around one common centre; therefore,

Resolved, That the Western Unitarian Conference condition its fellowship on no dogmatic tests, but welcome all thereto who desire to work with it in advancing the Kingdom of God.

Adopted at Chicago, May 14, 1875.

The twenty-fifth session of the Western Unitarian Conference will convene at Cincinnati, Ohio, May 6—9. Sermons will be preached by Colvin Stebbins, of Detroit, and M. J. Savage, of Boston. Essays will be read by Messrs. Effinger, of Des'Moines, Iowa; Cravens, of Toledo; F. L. Hosmer, of Cleveland, Ohio. Reduced R. R. rates secured for delegates from Chicago and St. Louis. For further information inquire at this office or see further announcements.

WEST. UNIT. SUNDAY-SCHOOL SOCIETY.

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